

How *not* to do ITIL

By I. Til, Extra Sr. Consultant

So you read in *InfoTech Monthly Magazine* how many IT organizations, similar to your own, save hundreds of thousands of dollars every year by implementing these new IT Service Management processes - ITIL. They tout improved IT proficiency, 50% improved incident closure rates, 80% first-call close rate, increased customer satisfaction, preventive problem resolution, and a configuration database that *slices bread* too! Then in your next meeting with your boss he tells you things need to improve on a smaller budget or you may be running the mainframe decommissioning project in Jersey.

So you say to yourself how hard can it be to implement new IT Service Management processes to improve things?



You buy a set of books that lays everything out for you and your team. Send everyone in the group to training to make sure everyone is *speaking the same language*. Then you bring in expert consultants for their ITIL experience, expertise and knowledge. What can go wrong?

Don't Try and Do It All at Once

Unfortunately, your expert consultants tell you that all of your service management processes have a level 1 or worse maturity rating. This is something you already knew in your gut, but it was good to have it confirmed for only a couple hundred grand. You immediately think, this is a bigger project than you thought so I'm going to also need to bring in a really good project manager to manage all the projects that will ensue.

Wait, don't get carried away. Sure everything seems to be broken and you have a top-notch staff that's ready to work hard, but your already over-stretched, over-stressed team won't be able to absorb these new projects. Designing new processes, selecting new tools, and integrating them into the organization takes time, more time than you think.

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Something will *give*; like the new application that must be deployed, but really should be tested further prior to activation. Redesigning your Service Management processes, based on ITIL, will require the input of all your top IT talent, including your application team. So when you start your way down the ITIL path, only address the process area causing the most *pain* to your organization. Usually, this is a customer facing process that would not rate very high on the internal customer satisfaction survey. Take it on aggressively, completely and publicly. Resist the strong insistence of your colleagues to address the issues of other Service Management areas too. Complete your first Service Management redesign, tool selection, customization, training and transition before you move on to the next ITIL process area. Depending on the size of your organization this may take nine to twenty-four months, but now you have a good model for the next Service Management process redesign.

Don't Just Do the Tool

As you look at the project to redesign your Service Management processes it's easy to view the Service Management application as the *silver-bullet*. Why not, you chose the best-of-the-best; the product that is ITIL certified and is placed in the far upper-right box of the 4-box rating system. To get it in house you blew your software budget plus you had

to borrow some from the big SAP bucket. Additionally, to get the product functioning in your environment the vendor insisted that you need three full-time specialists from their consulting services organization to install and configure the application on your brand new server cluster to meet your unique requirements. This should solve everything.

More than likely you already have a service management application for your Help Desk to record and track IT incidents, but the perception is that it just really isn't *cutting the mustard*. In reality, the application you already have can do many of the same functions as the new application. It's just that no one was assigned the responsibility to ensure the application was being used appropriately and most effectively. The key element that was missing was the process definition which the application supports.

Sure with your new Service Management initiative you'll have your new tool with all the bells and whistles, but that won't be the big change for the IT organization. If you're serious about Service

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Management, what should be different is the process and the entire IT organization complying with the process. This is the cultural change that the *InfoTech Monthly* magazine talked about. If you don't emphasize the new process, at all levels, and its inherent roles and responsibilities, then your new tool will look the same as your current tool in just a few month's time. You'll be in the same inefficient boat *going upstream* again and you'll soon be learning how to say *water* as "worter".

Don't Minimize Process Ownership

Jim, I wanted to talk to you about a new role in the organization that I think you would be a perfect fit for. You probably know about this new Service Management redesign project that just kicked-off last month. The experts told us that we need an owner for

each process we design to ensure it operates effectively and efficiently, keeps management informed of its performance and ensure it is continually being improved. I thought you would be just the guy for our new Change Management process. What do you think?

Simply appointing someone as a Process Owner because they are intimately involved with the related process may seem logical, but more than likely is not the right choice.

Well that sounds good boss, but who's going to be creating those special SAP accounts that I've been working on for the past two years? Oh, don't worry; you'll be able to do both. This new role should only take about 5-10% of your time. You should be able to push off some of your work on to Charlie. He'd be more than happy to help you out.

What characteristics and skills are required for someone to be an effective Process Owner? Simply appointing someone as a Process Owner because they are intimately involved with the related process may seem logical, but more than likely it is not the right choice. A Process Owner needs to have the foresight to look at the process from different perspectives. A strategic view that ensures the needs of all users are met, not just one particular IT group. Is the process also aligned with the strategic IT direction? Additionally, the Process Owner must be able to look at the details of the process and establish the correct metrics to improve specific process activities.

For a new Service Management process implementation, a part-time process owner is not the best to really get a process *ingrained* into the culture. It takes continuous communications, instruction, measurement and influence to ensure a new process is adhering to its original intent and the tools supporting the process are effective.

Probably what's more important is the Process Owners level of authority. Most IT Service Management processes cross many, if not all, IT organizations. Since a process owner does not have responsibility for all the functional organizations

they must have the respect and authority to influence and enforce process compliance. A process owner can get quickly frustrated if the IT staff is not complying with the new process that took months to develop.

Don't Give Up

Single-threading ITIL process design and implementation may seem to make the Service Management project never-ending, but as you establish the model from the first process redesign, subsequent redesigns will complete much faster. It's really not advantageous attempting to resign all the processes at the same time, besides your IT staff may *melt-down* in the process if you impose such an endeavor.

After a large cross-organizational team, lead by outside consultants, spent many months designing a new Service Management process that is perfect for your organization, you don't want it to *be minimized* by thinking the new tool will take care of everything. The process, with its standards, metrics, roles and responsibilities, and so on will be the major change for the IT organization. Initially, this will require more attention and focus to ensure compliance by the entire IT organization.

From day one, the attention and focus on the newly implemented Service Management process must be the primary concern of the Process Owner. The right person with the appropriate insight, fortitude and authority needs to be guiding and adjusting the process and the tool, to ensure it meets the tactical and strategic needs of the entire IT organization.

So don't give up and keep pursuing your dream of level 5 Service Management processes so that your IT organization will be operating at maximum effectiveness and efficiency, your clients will be *delighted* with your organization's service, and you won't have to tell your friends your new New Jersey Turnpike exit number.

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